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Sexual Activity, Knowledge, and Attitudes Among North Carolina Adolescents, 2002

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The objective of this study is to examine differences in the level of reported sexual activity, parental communication, and knowledge and attitudes about birth control and sexuality among selected groups of North Carolina middle and high school students.

Methods: Surveys were administered to middle and high school students by the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program of the North Carolina Division of Public Health in the fall of 2002. The data were processed and descriptive statistics were produced by staff of the State Center for Health Statistics using SAS software.

Results: Among survey respondents, approximately 16 percent of middle school students and 30 percent of high school students reported ever having had sexual intercourse. Approximately 2 percent of those in middle school and 3 percent of those in high school reported that they had gotten a girl pregnant or that they had been pregnant. Higher rates of sexual activity were reported among boys, African Americans, high school students, and adolescents with a low grade point average (GPA). Among those who had sexual intercourse during the past three months, one-third did not always use contraception. Those more likely to report that they used contraception were boys, high school students, students of an "Other" race, and students with a high GPA.

Conclusions: These findings show that middle and high school students with higher GPAs are more likely to postpone sexual intercourse and more likely to use contraception when sexually active. The findings also suggest that positive communication between parents and adolescents contributes to the postponement of sexual activity during adolescence.



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